

EXHIBIT

9

Expert Report of Dr. Charles Gallagher

December 17, 2018

NAACP, et al.

v.

**City of Myrtle Beach, et al.
No. 4:18-cv-00554-MGL**

Background and Qualifications

I am a professor and chair of the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department at La Salle University in Philadelphia PA. My research focuses on social inequality, race relations, and immigration; and I have published over 50 articles, reviews, and books on these topics. My scholarship examines race relations, racial attitudes, immigration, and social inequality. I am the author and editor of: *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic: Four Volume Set* (edited by Charles A. Gallagher and Cameron Lippard, Greenwood Press, 1464 pages, 2014); *Being Brown in Dixie: Race, Ethnicity and Latino Immigration in the New South* (with Cameron Lippard and Lynne Riener, 2011); and *Rethorizing Race and Whiteness in the 21st Century* (with France Winddance Twine, Routledge, 2012). The sixth edition of my edited reader, *Rethinking the Color Line: Readings in Race and Ethnicity* (Sage) was published in August 2018. From 2016-2017, I was the Visiting Fulbright Professor of Sociology at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. As a nationally recognized expert on race and social inequality, I have given over fifty talks on these topics around the country and am a frequent media source for these topics, appearing in press, television and radio interviews over 100 times. I am currently writing a book on the politics of race and colorblindness.

In addition to the qualifications mentioned above, I have attached as Exhibit 1 my *curriculum vitae*, which includes all my relevant experience as well as a list of publications I have contributed to and/or authored within the last ten years. It also includes all of the other cases I have testified in at trial and/or deposition within the past five years. In addition to the documents and information reviewed listed below, the

opinions stated herein are based upon my knowledge, training and experience, and have been rendered within a reasonable degree of professional certainty.

Assignment and Compensation

During the Bikefest that occurs over Memorial Day Weekend (known as “Black Bike Week” or “Bikefest”), the City of Myrtle Beach authorities implement a one-way traffic pattern throughout the weekend, a 23-mile traffic loop on weekend nights, and bring in hundreds of additional police officers. The City does not impose any of these traffic restrictions or bring in significant numbers of police officers during the majority-white Harley Davidson bike rally or any other summer weekend when the crowds in Myrtle Beach are large and predominantly white.

I was asked to assess the statements and actions of the City of Myrtle Beach in light of the demographics of the Myrtle Beach area and the sociological research on race, stereotyping, and discrimination. As part of my assessment, I reviewed excerpts from deposition transcripts, other documents produced in discovery, and relevant research documents.

For work related to preparing this report and for all other work other than testimony, my fee is \$200 per hour plus reimbursable expenses. For testimony at deposition and trial, my fee is \$300 per hour plus reimbursable expenses. No portion of these fees was or is dependent on the nature of my findings or on the outcome of the case.

Statement of Opinions

In this report I will briefly summarize the demographics of the Myrtle Beach area and the sociological research on racial attitudes and stereotypes in the United States and South Carolina—illustrating how racial stereotypes shape beliefs about racial groups and how these views can lead to discriminatory behavior directed at racial minorities. I opine that the City of Myrtle Beach’s traffic plan and increased law enforcement during Black Bike Week should be evaluated in light of an established body of research on how the dominant group (in this case whites in and around Myrtle Beach) seek to minimize the presence of African Americans and maintain an environment that is majority white and under white control.

When the City of Myrtle Beach was sued for similarly putting traffic restrictions in place only during Black Bike Week in the early 2000s, Myrtle Beach authorities used the size of Bikefest, the age of the riders, and the propensity for criminal behavior of this group as the pretext to treat the white and black motorcycle festivals differently. City representatives are making similar claims in the present case to justify their renewed insistence on a traffic plan during the Bikefest, with a particular emphasis on fears regarding crime and safety. It is my understanding that there is no data, research, or analysis that supports the conclusion that this 23-mile traffic loop has an effect on minimizing gun violence or a positive effect on public safety. The real effect of the restrictions seems to be to create an experience that is anxiety-producing and inhospitable such that black bikers will stop coming to Bikefest.

The state of South Carolina has recently had a number of high profile shootings resulting in the killing of African Americans that have strained race relations. The killing

of nine black church members at Charleston Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church by avowed racist Dylann Roof and the recorded shooting of unarmed African-American Walter Scott as he ran away from a police officer have exacerbated race relations and created greater distrust between the African American population and law enforcement. Recent survey research found that a majority of blacks in South Carolina are worried that they will be treated unfairly by the police, see the criminal justice system as biased against them, believe the police are too quick to use deadly force, and believe the police are more likely to use deadly force against blacks rather than whites (Winthrop University 2016; USC 2016). The deployment of excessive numbers of police officers; the zero tolerance policing policies put in place; and a traffic plan that all but guarantees anxiety, anger, fear, and traffic gridlock could easily be viewed as race-based harassment and discriminatory treatment.

Demographic Profile of Horry County, Atlantic Beach, Myrtle Beach, and North Myrtle Beach

The 2017 American Community Survey found that Horry County's population of 333,268 individuals was 77.5 % non-Hispanic white, 13.3% black, and 6% Latino. In 2017, North Myrtle Beach (population 16,310) was 91 % non-Hispanic white, 3.2% black, and 3% Latino. In 2017, the city of Myrtle Beach (population 32,795) was 67% non-Hispanic white, 13.6% black, and 13% Latino. In 2017, Atlantic Beach (population 351 in 2000) was 82.1% black, 7.7% white and 7.1% other races. The state of South Carolina's total population in 2017 (5,024,369) was 64% non-Hispanic white, 27% black, and 6% Latino. Horry County, North Myrtle Beach, and Myrtle Beach have black populations that are smaller and white populations that are larger when compared to the

state of South Carolina's total white (64%) and total black (27%) populations (U.S. Census Quick Facts 2017).

The index of dissimilarity (a measure of racial population distribution across census tracts) for Myrtle Beach in 2010 was 51 (Brown University). The index number gets higher as racial groups tend to live with people of the same race in a census tract. An index value of 51 means that 51% of a racial group would have to move to another neighborhood to have an equal racial distribution within a census tract. Demographers consider any value above 60 as "very high" and any value above 50 as "high". Given a value of 51, Myrtle Beach's residential segregation as measured by the index of dissimilarity would be considered "high."

Another measure of residential segregation is the isolation index. This index calculates the percentage of same-group population in a census tract. A score of 100 on the isolation index would mean that the particular racial group in the census tract is entirely isolated from other racial groups. In Myrtle Beach, the isolation index in 2010 was 75.8 (Brown University).

Drawing on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) data, the Horry HOME Consortium 2017 Assessment of Fair Housing examined the relative segregation between racial and ethnic groups and these observations regarding racial segregation in the Myrtle Beach Community:

- WHITES: "There is relative segregation between the White and Non-White populations in Horry County and the rest of the jurisdiction. Approximately 73.7 percent of the jurisdiction's population identifies as White, but there are areas in Horry County and along the northern coast of Georgetown County – identified by ZIP code – with relatively high White populations (90% or greater). The rural regions outside of Horry County, particularly in Williamsburg County, are almost exclusively non-White majority areas."

- BLACKS: “There is also relative segregation between the Black and Non-Black populations in Horry County and the rest of the jurisdiction, particularly in the more rural areas. Approximately 21.2 percent of the jurisdiction’s population identifies as Black, but in the rural areas outside of Horry County, there are areas with relatively high Black populations (50 percent or greater). Williamsburg County is very rural and has a relatively high Black population.”

(2017 Horry HOME Consortium, pp. 27-28).

The high index of dissimilarity (51) and the exceptionally high isolation index (75.8) suggest that whites in Myrtle Beach live primarily with other whites and, based on tract level data, share little if any social space with non-whites in their respective neighborhoods. What these trends suggest is whites in Myrtle Beach live in racially-segregated communities. The high degree of racial segregation and high levels of racial isolation between blacks and whites in Myrtle Beach, coupled with the fact that Myrtle Beach sees very few African American “traditional tourists” throughout the year, means that whites in Myrtle Beach typically do not come in contact with a sizable black population or share social space with blacks for any extended period of time. The only time throughout the year where a sizable black population is present in this community is during Black Bike Week.

It is important to note that the population in Myrtle Beach and the Grand Strand has grown considerably in recent years. “The population in Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach and the Conway metropolitan area increased from 447,793 in 2016 to 464,165 in 2017... and Myrtle Beach grew 3.9%” in the same time period (Doria and Biesk 2018). Whites moving to South Carolina, particularly white retirees, account for the overwhelming majority of this population growth. While the black population has grown in sheer number, the percent of blacks in the region accounts for a smaller share of the

population. According to the US Census, in Horry County the black population decreased from 15.5% in 2000 to 13.3% in 2017. In terms of percentages, Horry County is less black today than it was 20 years ago.

Sociological Research on Racial Stereotyping and Discrimination

The alleged discriminatory treatment of black bikers by Myrtle Beach City officials needs to be understood in its historic and sociological context. For the last 75 years, a long and established record of social science research on racial attitudes in the United States has been amassed (Schuman et. al 1997; Farley 1994; Massey and Denton 1993). While the research shows a liberalizing of whites' attitudes on some social issues (*e.g.*, interracial marriage and voting for a black president), negative racial stereotypes of racial minorities by whites are still quite commonplace (AP 2012; Bobo 2011; Charles 2000; Gallagher 2003a, 2003b; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Feagin 1995). Stereotypes are exaggerated beliefs associated with an entire category of people where it is believed that all or almost all members of that category share a common, typically negative, trait, behavior, propensity or characteristic. These stereotypes become the basis to prejudge or be prejudiced toward a group based on faulty generalizations (Pettigrew 1980; Allport 1958; Brown 1995), and they can form the basis for race-based discrimination.

While large strides in race relations have been made, it is still the case in 2018 that a sizable part of the white population continues to believe various stereotypes about African Americans, including that they are less intelligent, more prone to violence, less hardworking, more criminal, and more willing to live off of welfare than whites. A nationally-representative study found that over two-thirds of whites believe that blacks

are more likely to prefer to live off welfare, while 50% of whites rated blacks as less intelligent and more prone to violence than whites (Markus and Moya 2010). In 2008, a General Social Survey found that 45% of whites rated blacks as less hardworking than whites (Bobo 2012). A 2014 study found 44% of whites believed that whites were more intelligent as a group (American National Election Study 2014). In 2014, 43% of whites agreed that social inequality was due to a lack of motivation or willpower rather than other structural explanations, such as poverty or a lack of access to quality schooling or living-wage jobs (Krysan 2018).

Importantly, this research shows that one of the most pernicious stereotypes about African Americans is an assumption of criminality. Examining how “being black” is synonymous with “being a criminal,” researchers found that the “stereotypes of blacks as criminals is widely known and is deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of Americans, irrespective of level of prejudice or personal beliefs” (Qullian and Pager 2001 p. 722). Researchers have found that “whites are more fearful of encounters with blacks than those with whites and that this fear of blacks was independent of the age and gender of the persons encountered, the context in which the encounter takes place, and the age and gender of the individual experiencing the encounter” (St. John and Hearld Moore 2003 p. 277).

These continued stereotypes result in ongoing prejudice and stereotyping against African Americans more generally. A 2012 poll conducted by the Associated Press with the assistance of researchers from Stanford University and the University of Michigan found that there has been an increase in anti-black attitudes since 2008. The researchers found that “51% percent of Americans now express explicit anti-black attitudes,

compared with 48% in a similar 2008 survey” (Associated Press 2012). A study of Los Angeles County found that there was a greater average level of hostility towards blacks by non-blacks compared to non-blacks’ hostility exhibited towards any other racial group (Bobo and Smith 1998).

Given this data, it is unsurprising that African Americans in South Carolina have significant concerns about racial discrimination. Almost half of African Americans (49%) were “very worried” or “somewhat worried” they would be the victim of racial discrimination, while only 22% of whites had the same concern. A 2016 poll from Winthrop University found that 41% of blacks in South Carolina rated race relations nationally as poor and 32% rated race relations in South Carolina as poor. In contrast, 69% of whites rated race relations as good or fair nationally and 76% said that race relations in the state of South Carolina were good or fair. The poll found that 45% of African Americans said they had been discriminated against in the last year because of their race, while 19% of whites answered in the same way. In the same poll, blacks listed “racism” as the most important problem in the US and listed racism as the third most important problem (behind jobs and education) in South Carolina. In the polls ranking the importance of issues at the state and national level, “racism” was not included in whites’ top three concerns. More than a third of whites polled (35%) said it was the wrong decision to remove the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds. These finding of racial attitudes in South Carolina are consistent with national polling data. A 2016 nationally representative survey by Pew found that 61% of blacks but 45% of whites thought the state of race relations was relatively bad (Pew 2016).

Simply put, a sizable part of the white population holds stereotypical views that blacks are prone to violence and criminality (stereotypes that are widely disseminated in the mass media). As discussed further below, because of these negative stereotypes, many whites believe that blacks should not try to insert themselves in social situations, establishments, or neighborhoods where whites feel they are not “wanted.”

Sociological Research on Controlling White Spaces

Scholars have found that whites, as the dominant group in an established racial hierarchy, seek to monopolize and control public and private resources they believe are their exclusive or proprietary property. In his seminal work linking stereotypes, racial attitudes, and racism to one’s sense of “group position,” Herbert Blumer (1958) explained that whites view public resources (neighborhoods, town squares, pools, schools, jobs, restaurants) as their own private property because the established racialized hierarchy places whites above blacks. These race-based entitlements were sanctioned by social norms, enforced by law, and kept by force (Blumer 1958, Harris 1993, Bobo 2001, Alba 2009, Samson and Bobo 2014).

One way this manifests is in white attitudes toward “neighborhoods.” According to research conducted by HUD, Hispanics and blacks continue to face discrimination in the housing and rental markets. Whites are more likely to be shown housing in white neighborhoods than equally qualified black home buyers. Matching studies found that such geographic steering was on the rise suggesting that “whites and blacks are increasingly likely to be recommended and shown homes in different neighborhoods” (Urban Institute 2002). This is in part because, much in the same way that some whites

negatively stereotype blacks and wish to minimize contact, neighborhoods that are majority black are viewed as undesirable by whites.

Demographers found that among all racial groups whites viewed blacks as the least “desirable” potential neighbors because “whites associate negative characteristics, including high crime rates, declining property values, and ineffective schools with neighborhoods that have more than a token number of blacks” (Logan, Stults and Farley, 2004 p. 1). According to Massey and Denton, “[w]hite apprehension about racial mixing is associated with the belief that having black neighbors undermines property values,” which implies that “whites perceive blacks to be a direct threat to their social status” (Massey and Denton 1993, p. 94). Research has also found that “whites feel threatened by blacks as their group size and proximity to the black population increases” (Gallagher 2003, p. 382. *See also* Massey and Denton 1993, Samson and Bobo 2014).

Social scientists working in this field opine that the sense of white entitlement and the monopolization of social, political, and economic resources are a reflections of whites’ perceived and actual privileged placement in a social system based on a racial hierarchy. The positioning of whites over blacks within this racial hierarchy justifies, as members of this group see it, the exclusive right to preferred social and economic resources. These actions serve to maintain white privilege and reestablish, reframe, recreate, and protect the existing racial hierarchy.

Historically, segregated public spaces and the criminalization of individual interactions between whites and blacks were a matter of law, blatantly guaranteeing that whites would seldom have to compete for resources or share social space with blacks. This was a form of white supremacy in its clearest manifestation. Jim Crow law ensured

that desired social amenities like quality housing stock, high performing schools, and parks or restaurants were under the control of and solely available to whites because racist ideology defined whites as socially and biologically superior to blacks. That blacks did not have legal access to the vast majority of beaches in South Carolina for much of the 20th century is one such example of how whites monopolized public and private resources through legal mandates.

A more subtle manifestation of how whites continue to monopolize and maintain nearly all-white spaces today is through control of local and county government. According to City Manager John Pedersen, the “majority of city leadership”—which includes city council members, the mayor, city managers, city attorneys and the chief financial officer—have been white since he arrived in Myrtle Beach in 2002. The power structure in Myrtle Beach has always been controlled and monopolized by whites.

Black Hypervisibility and White Threat

Research suggests that the perceived size of the non-white population has a strong influence on anti-black prejudice by whites and their perceived threat to whites’ social status. A national study examining the link between racial group size, racial attitudes, and perceptions of threat found that, as whites perceive blacks’ group size increasing and are forced to share social space with blacks, whites feel increasingly threatened by blacks. This research indicates that prejudice towards blacks varies with the size of the black population; as the size of the black population increases, so too does anti-black prejudice by whites (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Alba 2005; Gallagher 2011). The positive relationship between group size means that the “the greater the percentage of blacks in an

environment, the more racially antagonistic whites tend to be” (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000, p. 575). The high degree of residential segregation in the United States “markedly enhances the visibility of a group, it makes them seem larger and more menacing” (Allport 1979 p. 269). Residential segregation and the lack of contact between most whites and blacks in the United States also help explain why a 2012 poll found that the average American thinks the United States is 33% black, almost three times the actual percentage (Transatlantic Trends 2012). The lack of contact between racial groups and the perceived hypervisibility of blacks (the tendency for whites to over count the black population), is one factor that is thought to breed ignorance, hostility, and discrimination towards racial minorities (Allport 1954; Alba 2005; Gallagher 2014, 2003, 2001).

Horry County Council Chairman Mark Lazarus provides an example of how race and perceptions of group size intersect. In his deposition, Mr. Lazarus said that the ratio of people on Ocean Boulevard during Black Bike Week compared to any other events in Myrtle Beach is 500 to 1. This was Mr. Lazarus’ opinion and he could offer no statistical data to support his claim. All of the city employees testified that they believed there were more people in the Myrtle Beach area during Memorial Day Weekend, but admitted their opinions were not based on any data, facts, or studies that gave valid and reliable population estimates for tourist events in Myrtle Beach. Indeed, it is my understanding that the city has not offered any statistical evidence to support the allegation that Memorial Day Weekend attracts the largest tourist population.

Given the tendency for whites to both over-count and attach negative stereotypes to the black population, it is essential that city officials, policy makers, and social science researchers understand that racial bias may influence or distort how individuals frame,

address, and implement planning decisions or formulate social policy. In the context of the Myrtle Beach Black Bike Week, without objective measures of population size (like standardized population density surveys) or objective ways to evaluate traffic congestion (like measures of vehicles per day), subjective means of group size measurement are likely to be racially biased. This racial bias in measurement is due to the tendency by whites to over-count the non-white population and to feel threatened by an increasing black group size. Having an objective, valid, and reliable instrument to measure the size of each group would ensure that racial bias did not influence group size estimates. Instead, in the depositions I reviewed, the city used nothing more than anecdotes and “opinions” (as many city officials put it) to calculate the size of these populations and then used those subjective estimations to inform planning decisions.

Consistent with the literature on overestimating the size of black populations and their threat are comments made about a “racial paranoia” concerning the large influx of blacks into Myrtle Beach during Black Bike Week. When ex-Police Chief Warren Gall was asked in deposition if he ever observed this racially motivated anxiety about the arrival of blacks to Myrtle Beach, he replied “yes,” explaining, “some of the conversations that – that the public – the public had with me and had at city council meetings could be construed that way (p. 68).” In deposition, Police Chief Amy Prock said she witnessed this racial paranoia, saying, “I’ve observed some, in my opinion, inappropriate comments at – you know, at city council, at public forums and that respect (p. 253).” City Manager Pedersen also stated, when referring to racial paranoia, “Yes, I do think that there are citizens that base their reac – their reaction on that” (p. 211).

Racial paranoia and the overestimation of “danger” can be seen in the City’s actions as well. In 2015, the Myrtle Beach City Council passed an “Extraordinary Events Ordinance.” The original version of the Ordinance made explicit that the target of the Ordinance was the Atlantic Beach Memorial Day Bikefest, which it described as “overwhelming the community and its resources,” “distressing residents and businesses,” “causing residents and visitors to fear for their safety,” and “engendering anarchy on the public streets and rights-of-way.” It also included significant curfew restrictions and limitations on carrying backpacks and wearing hats or scarfs. Although the Ordinance was amended, this language indicates the level of threat that City representatives believed was caused by Bikefest, despite a complete lack of data to support the conclusion that such a threat actually existed.

Sociological Research on Race and Policing

In addition to affecting the way that they perceive other people, sociological data also show that blacks and whites have very different opinions and experiences when it comes to race and issues related to policing. Representative surveys conducted by Winthrop University and the University of South Carolina’s Institute for Public Service and Policy Research find that a sizable part of the local African American population: believe they are targets of discrimination because of their race; believe they are treated unfairly by the police; are made nervous by police in their neighborhoods; and believe that police are “too quick to use deadly force.”

These views on race relations are quite different from those held by white South Carolinians. In a Winthrop University poll conducted last year, more than half of

African-American South Carolinians (52%) said that they were very or somewhat worried about being treated unfairly by the police. Only 12% of whites shared this concern. In fact, an overwhelming majority of whites (88%) said they were “not too worried” or “not worried at all” about being mistreated by the police. According to a survey conducted by the University of South Carolina, close to one third (30.1%) of African Americans in South Carolina felt that police in their community “made them feel mostly nervous.” Only 12% of whites shared the same feeling of anxiety regarding a police presence in their neighborhoods. These surveys suggest that there exists a significant amount of tension between African Americans and local law enforcement around the perceived targeting of African Americans for mistreatment by the police. These perceptions of mistreatment are thought to be linked to recent high profile, racial incidents in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Charlotte. It is within this climate of mistrust and anxiety regarding how African Americans perceive their treatment by law enforcement that in 2017 over 800 law enforcement officers were brought from jurisdictions throughout the region to Myrtle Beach for Black Bike Week. Officers were instructed to engage in aggressive policing and strict enforcement of local ordinances. To put this number in perspective, Harley Motorcycle Week had less than a tenth of the police presence of Black Bike Week.

Maintaining White Spaces in Myrtle Beach

The evidence shows that, although Memorial Day Weekend may be the busiest weekend of the year in Myrtle Beach on some years, it is not significantly bigger than other busy summer weekends. There is also no analysis that has been cited by City

witnesses or provided to Plaintiffs that would establish that either the crowds are significantly bigger during Memorial Day Weekend or that there are significantly greater amounts of traffic or crime.

The real distinction between Memorial Day Weekend and all other busy summer weekends in Myrtle Beach is the race of the tourists who come to town. In their survey of tourism in Myrtle Beach, Professors Nale, Rauch, and Barr found that 94.8% of those who visit the Myrtle Beach for Harley Week are white and 95.3% who visit during Black Bike Week are African-American. Similarly, Plaintiffs' demographics expert, Allan Parnell, assessed the racial composition of attendees during 2017 and found that 71.3% of Harley Week attendees were white, while 86% of attendees during Black Bike Week are black. My understanding is that multiple witnesses have all testified that Memorial Day Weekend is the only busy summer weekend in Myrtle Beach where the majority of the crowd is African-American.

Nale, Rauch, and Barr also found that "traditional tourists" (non-bikers who visit Myrtle Beach throughout the year) tend to be almost all white (94.3%). In their survey, only 3.4% of "traditional tourists" were African-American. In a state that is 27% black, Myrtle Beach is not a "traditional tourist" destination for a significant percentage of the state of South Carolina's or the nation's black population.

The City has publicly and repeatedly declared that it wishes to encourage "traditional tourism," i.e. white tourism, in the City of Myrtle Beach. These sentiments were expressed in City of Myrtle Beach Comprehensive Plan of 2011.

"The *family beach image* needs to be encouraged and supported by all businesses. Negative national publicity about the congestion and behavior during motorcycle rallies hurts the family business. City image is very important to these banking representatives. Crime and the perception of

crime is a problem that needs addressing such as beach and street robberies reported in the daily newspapers and on television. The panel discussed the problem with balancing the need to address *crime without giving the image of becoming a police state*" (p. 36, emphasis mine).

The Comprehensive Plan made mention again that motorcycle events are a cause for concern (although suggesting that some motorcycle events are more of a "concern" than others). The planning committee raised the point that:

The area's tourism industry brings with it large crowds and their behavior during special events. Noise levels at open-air concerts and the activities of visitors during *some motorcycle events* have been the source of concern for years. Such events bring the comfort and safety of residents up against the primary industry of the Grand Strand; the Police Department and its ability to maintain domestic tranquility is placed in the middle. The City has a wide range of ordinances aimed at controlling unruly behavior that degrades the quality of life for our visitors and residents (p. 94, emphasis mine).

The desire to control Myrtle Beach, the Grand Strand "brand," and the direction of economic development should be understood as an attempt to control resources that whites—particularly white politicians and business elites—view as their property, which should be subject to their ownership and control. The "brand" that Myrtle Beach wishes to promote is that of a family beach destination, but Myrtle Beach has concluded that "some motorcycle events" (and their attendees) do not promote that brand. This ignores the testimony that many Bikefest attendees attend with their families and go to the beach while they are in town, and focuses only on any subset of attendees that fit the stereotypes discussed above.

The desire that Myrtle Beach not be racially "branded" as a black destination because of Black Bike Week has been discussed by John Pedersen and Thomas Smith. As Mr. Pedersen put it in his deposition "we don't refer to the Carolina Country Music Festival as the White Country Music Festival. We don't refer to the jazz festival as the

African-American jazz festival” (p. 206). Thomas Smith likewise wants to remove race from the name of Black Bike Week because he sees it as being disrespectful to “[e]veryone” (p. 211). The desire to erase, minimize, or discount race by whites is consistent with a literature on whiteness and colorblindness. Various polls taken about institutional racism treatment by the police and racial attitudes suggest that whites, typically by very large margins, believe that race plays little or no role in how racial minorities are treated. If institutional racism is a practice of the past and we now all inhabit a colorblind society, why, this particular logic goes, do we need to insert race into something like Black Bike Week?

Summary/Concluding Statements

Given the stereotypes that many whites have towards many African Americans, and the desire to keep spaces they see as theirs “white,” it is not surprising that the City leadership (being almost entirely white) has concluded that black bikers are not “desirable” tourists. This stereotyping is further evinced by the City leadership’s focus on the May 2014 shooting during Black Bike Week as an excuse for the harsh restrictions now put in place. Evidence shows that shootings and other gun violence occur throughout the year in the Myrtle Beach area, including on other busy summer weekends. But Former Mayor John Rhodes stated, after a violent incident in May of 2014, that “[t]his is not what happens the rest of the year, so please don’t look at this as something as a habit that happens every week.” The implicit suggestion is that violent behavior only takes place during Black Bike Week, and that once the black tourists leave, there will be a return to safety and normalcy.

City officials are not even in agreement which is the busiest weekend, event or month in Myrtle Beach. The 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Carolina Country Music Festival, Spring Break, and Easter are all thought to be events that generate especially large numbers of tourists. Yet only one event, Black Bike Week, is subject to a severe traffic plan—one that has no clear connection to public safety outcomes and results in a massive police presence. One outcome of having such an overwhelming police presence is to further heighten the anxiety, nervousness, and worries of black visitors during their Myrtle Beach experience. Given the mistrust between some blacks and the law enforcement community, this type of hyper-policing can quite easily be interpreted by blacks as a signal that they are unwelcome in Myrtle Beach.

Thus, the traffic plan and the exceptionally large number of police officers brought in for Black Bike Week (none of which are used during any other busy summer weekend), demonstrate an attempt by public employees (including the mayor, police, councilman, etc.) to create an environment that is so hostile, intimidating, and uninviting that they will effectively rid Myrtle Beach of black bikers. Former Mayor Rhodes has been explicit about the goal of the 23-mile traffic loop: “We’re trying to move people outside of the city. We’re trying to get them out.” This could be understood in the literal sense of getting the black bikers out of the downtown, but also implies that the loop will, in the long run, get the black bikers “out” of the Myrtle Beach community permanently. The City’s actions demonstrate its sense of a proprietary claim over these white spaces, and research shows that discriminatory treatment can follow when racially-subordinate groups threaten the position of the dominant group or encroach on what the dominant group perceives to be its assets.

In sum, I believe that the City of Myrtle Beach's treatment of Black Bike Week must be viewed within the lens of the demographics of the Myrtle Beach area, the demographics of the tourist crowds during Black Bike Week compared to all other busy summer weekends, and the well-documented sociological research explaining how whites are more likely to overestimate both the number of African Americans in a space as well as the danger that such individuals present. In addition, one should consider the sociological research on maintaining and controlling white spaces in understanding and interpreting the City's actions during Memorial Day Weekend.



Dr. Charles Gallagher

12/17/18
Date

Documents and Information Reviewed/Relied on in Preparation for this Report

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